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PAGE 01 MANAGU 05111 042217Z
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Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
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Date 2/27/02 Exemption _____

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UNCLAS MANAGUA 05111

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: MOPS NU
SUBJECT: GON VICE MINISTER OF DEFENSE GIVES MILITARY
BRIEFING

1. JOAQUIN CUADRA LACAYO, VICE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND
CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE SANDINISTA PEOPLES ARMY
(EPS), HAS BEEN THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF EPS OFFICIALS
TO DECLARE THE "STRATEGIC DEFEAT OF THE CONTRAS."
CUADRA'S COMMENTS WERE MADE DURING A PRESS BRIEFING ON THE
MILITARY SITUATION COVERING THE PERIOD JANUARY TO JULY
1986, AND WERE CARRIED BY THE SANDINISTA TELEVISION NET-
WORK AUGUST 1 AND BARRICADE AUGUST 3. CUADRA REPORTEDLY
BOASTED THAT EVEN THE "HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS WILL NOT
CHANGE THE STRATEGIC SITUATION OF THE CONTRAS."

2. CUADRA MADE THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL POINTS:

-- HE CLAIMED THAT THE "JORGE SALAZAR" REGIONAL COMMAND,
WHICH HAD SOUGHT TO "DEVELOP STRATEGIC OPERATIONS IN BOACO
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PAGE 02 MANAGU 05111 042217Z

AND CHONTALES (REGION V), "HAD BEEN FORCED TO RETREAT TO
"MILITARILY DISADVANTAGED TERRITORY;"

-- CUADRA SAID THAT DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS, THE
CONTRAS HAD SUFFERED 2,745 KILLED AND THAT THE EPS HAD
CAPTURED 300. HE CLAIMED THE CONTRA HAD VIOLENTLY KID-
NAPPED 259 PERSONS, A FIGURE THAT CORRESPONDED COIN-
CIDENTLY TO THE NUMBER OF CONTRA DESERTERS FOR THE LAST
FEW MONTH?;

-- HE NOTED THAT THE CONTRAS HAD BEEN "INCAPABLE OF
BREAKING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESTRUCTURING THAT THE
REVOLUTION HAD CARRIED OUT IN THE WAR REGIONS;"

-- HE HAILED THE "IMPORTANT SUCCESS" OF THE EPS IN BEING ABLE TO "FILL UP" WITH PERSONNEL THE BLI'S AND THE "LIGHT HUNTER" UNITS;

-- CUADRA WARNED THAT THE FORTHCOMING PRESENCE OF U.S. MILITARY ADVISERS "PRESAGES" THE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF U.S. TROOPS;

-- HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE "POLITICAL ELEMENT" OF THE APPROVAL OF MILITARY AID TO THE CONTRAS IS THAT THE CIA HAS BEEN GIVEN "A FREE HAND TO OPENLY CARRY OUT NEW OPERATIONS AGAINST NICARAGUA;"

-- HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE CONTRAS WOULD BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED ARMAMENTS AND COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT.
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*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED